

Feb. 4, 1954

S. C. Farrington, Chief
Phoenix Real Estate Field Office
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
137 No. 2nd Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Mr. Farrington:

This letter is in reference to a meeting in Governor Pyle's office on January 29, 1954, attended by representatives of your office, the Sixth Army and the Huachuca Signal Corps.

At that time it was requested by Governor Pyle, Arizona Game and Fish Commission Chairman C. J. Mantle and Director John Hall that the Commission be permitted to continue to use the Huachuca area for wildlife study purposes and to graze the existing herd of buffalo, as compatible with Signal Corps operations. At the suggestion of Governor Pyle and Army personnel at the meeting, we would like to point out reasons for our past interest in the Huachuca area and why we are anxious to continue its use.

As you know, when Fort Huachuca was abandoned by the Army several years ago, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, after considerable negotiation, acquired the area early in 1949 to inaugurate and conduct a continuing wildlife research and investigation program. Subsequently, a buffalo herd has gained attention locally and statewide, but our primary interest in the area has not been for this purpose.

Fort Huachuca played an important role in the pioneering of the southwest, not only from the standpoint of the early settler but from the early nature explorer as well. In its early history it was host to many biologists. Some of them were military officers whose curiosity led them to investigate the flora and fauna of the country. Through the years since then the area has continued to claim the interest of nature students because of the varied species, both plant and animal, found in its varying habitats from rolling grassland to high, rugged mountain peaks. The Huachuca Mountains eventually

is known as one of the most important natural areas of the southwest and nationally still holds that distinction.

As land use progressed in the early days throughout the southern part of Arizona and the southwest great changes occurred in the vegetal cover. The grass stands were virtually eliminated in the desert shrub type and vastly altered in the higher desert grassland. The habitat of wildlife correspondingly changed. Those pressures of cover and forage reduction, of hunting and of human habitation, have influenced the range and populations of our present wildlife throughout the southwest.

On Fort Huachuca, however, military activity since 1887 has prevented livestock grazing in the degree surrounding ranges have received. Thus the flora on the area more nearly approaches that of the southwest before settlement by man. It follows, then, that wildlife now on the area find a habitat more similar to that enjoyed by game species when their populations were more abundant.

Today the Arizona Game and Fish Commission is charged with the responsibility of maintaining and restoring the state's wildlife for present and future generations. This effort involves certain specialized studies to better understand some of the basic problems in the management of game animals and a number of academically trained wildlife biologists are employed for this purpose. Increased wildlife populations throughout Arizona today and recognition of the necessity of sound range management wherein wildlife populations are concerned bear out the merit of this policy.

After the acquisition of Fort Huachuca in 1949 a specialized wildlife study was inaugurated there for the purpose of studying various phases of game relationships and tolerance to habitat. Information gathered by comparing over a period of time the reaction of various resident species on the Fort lands with their reactions on lands grazed in varying intensities off the Fort was to be used to determine the game species that can be managed to produce a harvestable surplus in southern Arizona under present land use practice, and what management practices can be used on a given species to maintain it and to produce a harvestable surplus. Findings would be applicable throughout the southwest.

To that end the wildlife study project progressed for two years until the accelerated national defense program necessitated the reactivation of Fort Huachuca and a curtailment of the wildlife program. During the two years a complete inventory of the Huachuca range was made which will serve as a permanent record of plant and animal species on this unique area in the year 1950. Antelope and wild turkey, formerly native to the range, were reintroduced and the antelope have already spread to a considerable portion of its former range in southern Arizona as a result. Two species of quail, which are thought to have been native, were added to the resident scaled, Mearns's and Gambel's quail to provide five different species of quail on the limited but diversified range. A buffalo herd was established and the grassland

served as a haven for most of two other state-owned herds in northern Arizona when unprecedented drought conditions necessitated removal from their home ranges. A firm basis for a long term comparative study of the habits and requirements of wildlife species on and off the area was begun. Extensive reports in our files, some of which have been transmitted to your office for review, confirm this statement.

Upon reactivation of the Fort in 1951 it was fortunate that the military command recognized and has continued to recognize, the values that are certain to come from the wildlife studies inaugurated. Likewise, the great public interest in the buffalo herd has been considered. During the five year period since 1949 the Game and Fish Commission has expended a considerable amount from its limited funds in land improvement programs. This has included completely fencing the Reservation, over half with page wire, additional watering facilities, cross fences, pastures, large corrals and the repair and maintenance of five dwellings subsequently used by military personnel after 1951. A maintenance foreman has been in residence continuously since 1949 to care for fences, watering facilities and other installations and to handle the buffalo at any time military officials wished them moved or corralled.

In consideration of the above factors it is hoped the Signal Corps Command and personnel of your agency will find it possible to permit us to continue to use the Huachuca area for wildlife purposes in any manner compatible with Signal Corps activities. Our interests would be best served if consideration could be given the following factors.

1. Continued use of the northern portion of the area, designated as Unit No. 1, as provided in the existing 25 year lease.
2. The use of the southeastern portion, designated as Unit No. 4, to permit the proper grazing management of Unit No. 1 and to provide an area to which the buffalo can be moved in the event Unit No. 1 is needed for Signal Corps or National Guard activities from time to time.
3. A minimum of disturbance, not necessary in Signal Corps operations, to wildlife species and their habitat in the mountainous area, designated as Unit No. 6.
4. Permission for a maintenance caretaker to remain in residence.
5. Periodic access by department biologists, maintenance crews and other personnel.
6. Jurisdiction over wildlife species by the Commission as provided by state law.

We might point out that it would be impossible for us to remove

S. C. Farrington

Feb. 4, 1954

Page Four

the buffalo from the Huachuca area because other range is not available. Our only recourse, in the event removal is desired, is to shoot them and dispose of the meat.

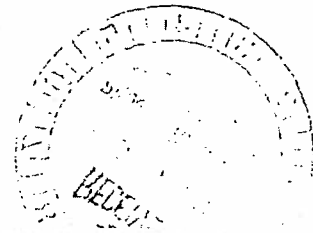
7. Public access where possible.

In closing, we want to assure you and General Lenzner that we are most anxious to cooperate, as in the past, in any way and at all times with members of the Commanding Officer's staff.

Thank you for your continued interest.

Very truly yours,

John M. Hall
JOHN M. HALL, Director
Arizona Game and Fish Commission



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